

Sūrah Ṭaghābun

Central Theme and relationship with the Preceding *Sūrah*

The previous *sūrah* ended on the warning that the love of wealth and children should not make people indifferent to the remembrance and rights of God; they should make use of the blessings and provisions bestowed on them by Him to earn for the Hereafter; otherwise when the time of death arrives, people will express the yearning of being given more respite so that they can spend their wealth in the way of God and earn some reward for it; however, this yearning will remain a yearning. What has happened has happened; the past never comes back. In this *sūrah*, this very subject is the central theme, and it is explained that this worldly life is not all that there is; the real life is the life of the Hereafter which is bound to come; it is in that life that the decision of success or failure in the previous life will be known. Therefore, it is mandatory upon one who has the resolve to achieve the great success of the Hereafter, to be prepared for every sacrifice to please God and His Prophet (sws). In this matter, he should disregard the rebukes of any rebuker and the preaching of any preacher. At times, a person's wife and children become a hindrance in this way, and their love weakens the resolve of many. It is essential for one who wants to keep his faith intact, to regard such wife and children to be a trial, and protect himself from them; however, he must be forgiving towards them.

Analysis of the Discourse

Verses (1-4): The Almighty has not created man in this world without a purpose. The great effort undertaken by the Almighty in His creation to sustain and nourish him bears witness that the Day of Reckoning has an appointed time. Allah, the Lord and Creator of this world, is well aware of every person's words and deeds. He shall treat each person according to what he deserves.

Verses (5-7): By citing historical evidence, it is shown that nations who denied the warnings of their respective prophets about the Hereafter and vainly rejected their sound arguments on the pretext that accepting a human being as a prophet (sws) is an insult to them were all destroyed by Allah. They met a dreadful fate in this very world, and in the Hereafter also they shall encounter a grievous punishment.

Verses (8-10): People are invited to profess faith in Allah, His Prophet

(sws) and the Qur'ān. They are urged to prepare for the Day which will decide the victor and the vanquished. On that day, the Almighty will grant people of faith and the righteous the eternal reward of paradise, while He will cast those who adhered to disbelief in the eternal torment of Hell.

Verses (11-13): It is asserted that troubles and hardships which a person has to face in his life come with the permission of God. It is not befitting for the believers to become apprehensive because of them and turn away from the obedience of Allah and His Prophet (sws). It is the requirement of their faith that they should have trust in the Almighty: He will certainly help them. If they try to evade God and the Prophet (sws) by being overawed by their hardships, they shall bear its dire consequences. The responsibility of the Prophet (sws) was only to communicate the truth, which he has done; it is now their responsibility to abide by it.

Verses (14-15): Muslims are warned that at times family becomes a great test of faith. Love for family members sometimes negatively affects determination to fulfill religious obligations. It is thus essential for a person that their love or their desires should not restrain him in the cause of religion. However, he should adopt the attitude of “to forgo and forget” in their regard.

Verses (16-18): People are invited to obey Allah and His Prophet (sws) as much as they can, and urged to generously spend for the cause of religion. Glad tidings are given of eternal success to those who protect themselves from the malady of miserliness. Allah will greatly honour those who will lend Him their wealth. It shall be returned to them multiplied many times; He shall also forgive them. He has knowledge of both the seen and the unseen: He is fully aware of all virtuous deeds however secretly they might have been done.

Text and Translation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
(١) هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ خَلَقَ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ (٢-٤) أَلَمْ
يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ فَذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ كَانَتْ

تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالُوا أَبَشِّرْ يَهُدُونَنَا فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا وَاسْتَغْنَى اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ (٥-٦) زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُبْعَثُوا قُلْ بَلَى وَرَبِّي لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ وَذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ فَاْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ (٧-٨) يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمُ لِيَوْمِ الْجُمُعِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّعَابِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ (٩-١٠) مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَىٰ رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (١١-١٣) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَرْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَغَفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَاسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ إِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (١٤-١٨)

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies God alone. His only is the sovereignty, and to Him is due our gratitude and He has power over all things. (1)

It was He Who created you: so some of you are disbelievers, while others are believers. And God is aware of all that you do. He created the heavens and the earth with a purpose, and fashioned you, so fashioned you well. And to Him is the return. He knows what is in the heavens and the earth and He knows what you conceal and what you reveal. And God is aware of the secrets of the hearts. (2-4)

Have you not heard of those who disbelieved before you? So they tasted the fruit of their deeds, and for them is a grievous punishment. This is because their prophets continued to come to them with veritable signs; so they said to them: "Will mortals guide us?" Thus they disbelieved and turned away, and God became indifferent to them and God is self-sufficient and glorious. (5-6)

The disbelievers claim they shall never be raised to life after death. Tell [them:] "Yes, by my Lord, you shall certainly be raised to life! Then

you shall be told what you would have done.” And this is very easy for God. So believe then in God and in His Prophet and in the light that We have revealed. And God has knowledge of all what you are doing. (7-8)

Remember the day when on the day of gathering God will gather you. That shall, in fact, be the day of success and loss. And those who believed and did righteous deeds shall be forgiven by God and He will admit them to gardens watered by running streams. They will abide there forever. Supreme success, in fact, is this. And those who disbelieved and denied Our revelations, it is they who shall be the inmates of the Fire. They shall abide in it forever. And this will be a very evil abode. (9-10)

No misfortune befalls except by God’s permission. And he who believes in God, God guides his heart and God has knowledge of all things. And obey God and obey the Prophet. Thus if you pay no heed, Our Prophet’s responsibility is only of clear communication. God alone is worthy of worship; there is no god but Him, and in God should the believers put their trust. (11-13)

Believers! Some among your wives and children are your enemies; so beware of them. And if you forgive them, overlook their blemishes and pardon them, then God is forgiving and merciful. Your wealth and your children are a trial for you and with God lies great reward. So keep fearing God as much as you can and listen and show obedience and spend for your own good. Those who were protected from the malady of their soul’s greed will surely attain salvation. If you lend a generous loan to God, He will pay you back manifold and will forgive you. And God is the Most Appreciative, the Most Forbearing. He has knowledge of the unknown and the manifest. He is the Mighty, the Wise One. (14-18)

Explanation

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ¹

This verse also occurs in previous *sūrahs* with slight change in words, and I have already explained its various aspects at their respective places. Here the purpose of saying that everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies God is that by this very action undertaken by them urges man to see that God alone is the sovereign of this world, and to Him alone should we show our gratitude. Neither is anyone a partner in His sovereignty nor does anyone else deserve the gratitude of His servants.

The words *وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ* refer to the fact that it is absolutely clear that He has power over all things. He is not dependent on anyone to fulfill any of His tasks however great they may be. For this reason,

1. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies God alone. His only is the sovereignty, and to Him all gratitude is due and He has power over all things.

associating someone with Him is an absolutely meaningless thing. He neither sought help from anyone in creating this world nor is He dependent on anyone in running its affairs. He has accomplished everything on His own, and just as He did this in the past, He will continue to do it in the future as well. Thus sufficient is He to be trusted alone by His servants. They must put their trust in Him, and not associate anyone else with Him in serving Him.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُّؤْمِنٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ²(٢)

The God, who is glorified by every object of this world, also created man; it is thus only befitting that he too glorify Him who is glorified by all the stars of the heavens, all birds that fly about and every tree and stone of this earth; however, since the Almighty has blessed man with the freedom to exercise his will, some among them as a result have become disbelievers and others believers. Thus God is observing their deeds, and will deal with everyone according to the nature of these deeds. If He does not do this, it will only mean that belief and disbelief are equal in status in His eyes. This obviously is against His justice and wisdom.

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ³(٣)

This verse substantiates what has been stated earlier: The Almighty has created this world with a true purpose; it is the requisite of this true purpose that a day come on which the upholders of truth be rewarded for their attitude towards the truth, and those who spent their lives against this true purpose be punished.

The words وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ point to the elaborate arrangement made by the Almighty in creating man. Everyone can see that man has been created in the best of moulds. Thus the words used in Sūrah Tīn are: لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (٤:٩٥) (We have created man in the finest of moulds, (95:4)). The way man's inner and outer-self has been fashioned, and the way abilities and potentials are ingrained in him by the Almighty clearly show that real purpose of all creations of God is man. He stands at the pinnacle and the summit of all other creatures, which have been created to serve him directly or indirectly.

This elaborate arrangement in the creation of man and he being equipped with such grand abilities, relating both to his inner and to his

2. It was He Who created you: so some of you are disbelievers, while others are believers. And God is aware of all that you do.

3. He created the heavens and the earth with a purpose, and fashioned you so fashioned you well. And to Him is the return.

outer-self, show that God has not created him without a purpose: his life will not end after enjoying the pleasures of this world; if this is to happen, then all this elaborate arrangement providence has made in his creation and in sustaining him will be rendered meaningless. Consequently, on this very basis, the Almighty has reminded him of a great reality: the way the Almighty has generously provided for his upbringing, the way He has nourished and nurtured him and the way He has been elevated him above all other creatures by creating him in the best of forms requires that one day man come to the presence of God and be questioned on the favours bestowed upon him by God:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمُ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ
وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ (٦٤:٤٠)

It is God who has made the earth a dwelling-place for you, and the sky a roof. He fashioned you and fashioned you well and blessed you with wholesome things for sustenance. (40:64)

In other words, fashioning man in the best of forms, provision of apt sustenance and his high status among other creatures show that he be held accountable before his Lord.

On these very grounds, people who are not convinced of the Hereafter and the reward and punishment which is going to take place in it are threatened thus:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ
مَا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ (٨٢:٦-٨)

O Man! What is it that has deceived you about your Beneficent Lord, Who made your sketch, then perfected you and gave you due proportion. He put you together in whatever shape He pleased. (82:6-8)

This verse explains the elaborate arrangement made by God in the creation of man, and it simultaneously also refers in a threatening tone to the responsibility that, as a result, is imposed on him.

The words *وَالْيَهُ الْمَصِيرُ* allude to the fact that the God who has created this world with a great purpose and has created man in such a diligent and elaborate manner shows that he shall necessarily be returned to God one day to be rewarded or punished. If this does not happen, it would mean that all this elaborate arrangement is meaningless.

يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسْرُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ (٤)⁴

The verse urges a person not to remain in any doubt about the fact that God is aware of all that is happening openly or secretly in this world and that this information will become a source of accountability for man who will then be rewarded or punished accordingly by Him.

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ فَذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٥)⁵

The verse explains that previous nations who committed disbelief were made to taste a bitter punishment in this world, and in the Hereafter too a grievous punishment lies in store for them. This is a reference to the nations of ‘Ād and Thamūd and to the people of Lot (sws) whose accounts have also been related in detail in the previous *sūrahs* and the Quraysh were aware of them as well. In fact, they even got the chance of passing by the ruined settlements of some of these nations. By referring to the history of these nations, the Qur’ān has informed us that the Almighty is not unconcerned with the good and evil perpetrated in this world; on the contrary, He continuously sent His messengers, and when people denied these messengers they were severely punished by Him. The implication of the verse is that when the Quraysh are able to witness these examples of the Almighty’s law of retribution before their very eyes, why should they regard as improbable that the Almighty will bring forth a day in which He administers justice to the whole world and His justice and mercy manifest on that day in every sense of the word.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرٌ يَهْدُونَنَا فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا وَاسْتَغْنَى اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ (٦)⁶

The verse expresses the reason for which these nations were seized by God’s punishment. Even though the prophets were sent with manifest signs and arguments, these nations denied them because of arrogance and haughtiness and made up false excuses like asking why the Almighty made human beings His messengers and why He did not choose a superior creation for this purpose; why were they regarded to be

4. He knows what is in the heavens and the earth and He knows what you conceal and what you reveal. And God is aware of the secrets of the hearts.

5. Have you not heard of those who disbelieved before you? So they tasted the fruit of their deeds, and for them is a grievous punishment.

6. This is because their prophets continued to come to them with veritable signs; so they said to them: “Will mortals guide us?” Thus they disbelieved and turned away, and God became indifferent to them and God is self-sufficient and glorious.

such lowly creatures that human beings like them were chosen to guide them; the implication of this being the question whether were they really so bad that mere human beings were considered enough to guide them. Moreover, they themselves were enough for their own guidance; why then, should they burden themselves with a favour from others!

The words فَكْفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا وَاسْتَعْنَى اللَّهُ imply that by making such objections and excuses, these people rejected their messenger and his calls to the truth. The result was that the Almighty also became indifferent to them. It is the practice and law of God that He makes arrangements to guide His people; however, if they do not give due value and weight to this guidance, He becomes unconcerned with them and leaves them alone to reckon with the consequences of this attitude.

The sentence وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ refers to the fact that if the Almighty wants to guide people it is not because this is something which is to His benefit. That people are guided or wander in error is not of any benefit to Him. He does not need any of these attitudes; He is self-sufficient and glorious in His own self. If He makes arrangements to guide people, then this is only because in it lies their benefit; however, if they do not value this, He does not force His guidance upon them.

زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُبْعَثُوا قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَشَاعُنُ ثُمَّ لَنْبَعُثَنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ وَذَٰلِكَ عَلَىٰ
اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ⁷

Since these disbelievers claim that they will never be resurrected, they give no importance to the call of the prophets.

The words قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَشَاعُنُ direct the Prophet (sws) to reply to them equally vehemently and emphatically and convey to them on oath that they will surely be raised to life. In this sentence, the element of reasoning is stifled, and what is said is a claim in response to a claim because the latter claim has no reasoning behind it; however, concealed in the word وَرَبِّي is a very subtle form of reasoning: the providence of the Almighty the magnificence of which is evident in every speck of this universe necessitates that He does not deal in the same manner with the righteous and the wrong-doers; this providence necessitates that the former be rewarded for their deeds and the latter be punished. It follows from this that He will definitely raise the dead one day and hold them accountable for their deeds and reward or punish them accordingly.

The words وَذَٰلِكَ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ refer to the fact that these people should not

7. The disbelievers claim they shall never be raised to life after death. Tell [them:] “Yes! By my Lord, you shall certainly be raised to life! Then you shall be told what you would have done.” And this is very easy for God.

think that God will not be able to do so because He is powerless the way they are to bring about such a great event; it is indeed impossible for them to do so because both their knowledge and power are limited; however, it is very easy for God; He has unlimited power and knowledge.

فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْثُورِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ⁸ (٨)

This verse admonishingly asks the disbelievers to profess faith. They should not deny the Prophet (sws) by fashioning out such lame excuses, and profess faith in the light sent down by Him. The “light” obviously refers to the Qur’ān revealed by Him to distinguish between the truth and untruth. It should be kept in mind that the light that the Almighty had revealed to the People of the Book was abandoned by them, as is evident from details found in previous *sūrahs*. As a result, it became difficult for them to distinguish between truth and falsehood. However, when the Almighty once again revealed a fresh light in its ultimate form for the guidance of mankind, then instead of duly honouring it, they tried their best to blow out this light; they neither wanted themselves to benefit from it nor wanted others to be afforded with an opportunity to do so. At another place, the words of the Qur’ān are: *لِيُظْفِقُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ بِرِيدُونَ يُظْفِقُونَ* (they seek to extinguish the light of God with blows [of air] of their mouths; but God has decided that He will perfect His light, much as the unbelievers may dislike it, (61:8)).

The sentence *وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ* reminds them that they should not think that God is unaware of their deeds. Each and everything they do is in His knowledge, and one day they will have to answer for all this.

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّعَابِينِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ⁹ (٩-١٠)

The Quraysh are told that instead of being misled by the notion that the

8. So believe then in God and in His Prophet and in the light that We have revealed. And God has knowledge of all what you are doing.

9. Remember the day when on the day of gathering God will gather you. That shall, in fact, be the day of success and loss. And those who believed and did righteous deeds shall be forgiven by God and He will admit them to gardens watered by running streams. They will abide there forever. Supreme success, in fact, is this. And those who disbelieved and denied Our revelations, it is they who shall be the inmates of the Fire. They shall abide in it forever. And this will be a very evil abode.

Almighty will not be able to create them a second time, it is to their benefit that they remember the day of gathering on which the Almighty will gather them. This day is bound to come according to His scheme. The arguments in favour of this day are found in the world within man and the one around him and all the prophets and messengers and books of God have borne witness to it. Its advent is necessary to prove that this world is a meaningful creation, and if it does not come, then it would mean that this world is a purposeless creation and the playground of a merry-maker. At another place, the words are: (١٠٣:١١) *وَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ* (that is the day for which men shall be assembled and that will be the day of presence, (11:103)). At still another place, the words are: (٥٠-٤٩: ٥٦) *قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ* (tell [them]: “all those of the past and the future shall be brought together on an appointed day,” (56:49-50)). The stress in these verses of gathering all mankind on one day is to remove the doubt in the minds of these people that such an event is improbable; their contention was that no one could assemble the countless creatures which have or will inhabit the land and sea. They are emphatically told that the Almighty has appointed a day for this and it is bound to come. Instead of doubting it, they should prepare for it and keep it in their remembrance.

The expression *يَوْمُ التَّعَابِينِ* has been translated by Shāh ‘Abd al-Qādir as “the day of victory and defeat”.¹⁰ In my opinion, this translation is very accurate. The Qur’ān itself has subsequently explained this victory and defeat: those who embrace faith and do righteous deeds will be cleansed of the effects of their sins by the Almighty and admitted into gardens watered by streams. These people will remain in them forever, and those who are able to attain this in fact achieve great success. Totally contrary will be the fate of those who rejected the Almighty and denied His signs. They shall be cast into Hell and shall abide in it forever. It will be the worst of abodes.

The implication of the expression *يَوْمُ التَّعَابِينِ* is that those who have denied the Hereafter regard this world to be a place of victory and defeat. People who enjoy the luxuries of life think that they have won the day, and those who have been deprived of them think that they have been doomed. The truth of the matter is that this world is not a place of reward; it is a place of trial. The Hereafter is the place of reward where only they will be the victors who embraced faith in this world and did righteous deeds even though they had nothing from the provisions of life; on the other hand, people who did not embrace faith and did righteous deeds will be losers in the Hereafter even if they were very

10. Shāh ‘Abd al-Qādir, *Tarjumah Qur’ān* (Lahore: Pak Company, n.d.), 725.

affluent in this world.

It needs to be appreciated that it is impossible for people who regard this world to be the place of success and failure to help and serve others by sacrificing their own comforts and luxuries. Even, if at times, they try to bring themselves to this, the fear of some contingent future need will discourage them from such spending. On the contrary, people who regard the Hereafter to be the place of success and failure cannot be deterred by any such fear. Even if such a distracting thought does arise in them, they will attribute it to Satan, and by God's trust not show the slightest hesitation in such spending to reap success in the Hereafter.

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (١١)

In this verse, a distracting thought which could impede a person's efforts to achieve success in the Hereafter is removed. He is told not to give any importance to such a thought while obeying God and His Prophet (sws) and while trying to please them. He should remember that no hardship befalls a believer without God's permission. This is such a fact that it cannot be denied by a person who believes in God. So a person should rest assured that whatever he does while obeying the Almighty will never become for him a source of trial that is beyond his capacity. The Almighty is the most aware of the potential and abilities of His servants. He will never burden a person beyond his capacity.

The sentence وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ assures people who are enduring trials in the way of God. If a person remains steadfast in his faith no trial will dishearten him; in fact, the Almighty through the Holy Spirit will guide his heart at the right time. He is aware of everything and knows what befalls His servants. His help is well-timed through means man is not aware of. This is precisely what Jesus (sws) had told his students: "Do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you what you should say." (Luke 12:11-12). The twenty second verse of Sūrah Ḥadīd also discusses this subject. For details, readers can look up its *tafsīr*.

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ (١٢)

The Quraysh are directed not to try to evade the obedience of God and His Prophet (sws) by being overcome by wrong notions and superstitions.

11. No misfortune befalls except by God's permission. And he who believes in God, God guides his heart and God has knowledge of all things.

12. And obey God and obey the Prophet. Thus if you pay no heed, Our Prophet's responsibility is only of clear communication.

For they should remember that the only responsibility of the Prophet (sws) was to deliver in a clear manner the directives and guidance of God to them. If they fulfill this responsibility, then they will do what was required of them by God. The Prophet (sws) will not be asked about their faith; it is they themselves who will be asked why they did not accept his call.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (١٣)¹³

There is no other deity in the heavens and in the earth from whom one can fear any harm or expect any benefit. It is only God Who can do this, and thus the believers should trust Him. Their faith entails this very attitude.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (١٤)¹⁴

Mentioned in this verse is one of the greatest trials which causes impediment in the fulfillment of a person's obligations towards his Creator and in expending his life and wealth in the way of God: the love of one's wife and children. Though this is a very natural thing, it is also a great trial for a person. At times, there is a clash between this love and the love of God. If a person's faith is not strong enough, there is a possibility that he will be so overcome by the love and interest of his wife and children that he will end up ignoring his love for God even though this attitude may ruin his faith. Classical Arabic poets often mention women who rebuke generosity and bravery, and also mentioned in a narrative is the fact that what compels a person the most towards miserliness is his wife and children. It is this phenomenon which is alluded to in this verse by saying that some wives and children are the enemies of the believers. They are instrumental in stopping a person from fulfilling his duties towards God. Although this attitude emanates from them as well-wishers of that person; however, the end result of this is doom for him. Thus in this manner they in reality prove to be his enemies.

The word مِنْ in the expression مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ (للتبعيض) connotes part which means that not the wife and children of every person are his enemies. The wife and children of many instead of causing hindrance in this regard are helpful in this cause. However, if someone's family is not of this type, then he must protect himself from them so that they do not

13. God alone is worthy of worship; there is no god but Him, and in God should the believers put their trust.

14. Believers! Some among your wives and children are your enemies; so beware of them. And if you forgive them, overlook their blemishes and pardon them, then God is forgiving and merciful.

become a means of doom for him.

The last part of the verse *وَإِنْ تَعْفُوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ* is an explanation of how one should protect oneself from the evil of one's family: it is essential for a person to be watchful that his family does not stop him from the cause of God. At the same time, this should not lead him – as far as is possible for him – to sever his relations with them. He should try as much as he can to forgive and forgo their mistakes and realize that God is merciful and forgiving. He will forgive his blemishes and those of his family.

What thus becomes evident from this verse is that the correct attitude for someone who is faced with such a trial is that he should try to protect himself from being misled and to try to reform this weakness of his family through his own words and deeds. He must not sever his relationship with them unless they commit some act of disbelief and should keep forgiving them. In other words, he should live with them while being on guard for his own self and at the same time is able to reform them.

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ (١٥)¹⁵

This verse explains the subject discussed in the preceding one. The word *فِتْنَةٌ* refers to “trial” and “test”. The Almighty tries a person through his wealth and children. He judges whether he forgets Him by being infatuated by these or makes them a means to earn His love and pleasure. If he adopts the first path, it means that he failed in this test: he gave preference to the love of his wealth and children over the love of God whereas what was required of him was the reverse. At another place, the Qur’ānic words are: *وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ* (١٦٥:٢) (and the believers love God the most, (2:165)). And if they adopt the second path, then this will lead them to success. If by adopting this path, they even incur a loss in this world, they should rest assured that in the Hereafter the Almighty will compensate every loss with great reward.

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَحْنَ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (١٦)¹⁶

This verse sounds a final advice on the subject under discussion. They

15. Your wealth and your children are a trial for you and with God lies great reward.

16. So keep fearing God as much as you can and listen and show obedience and spend for your own good. Those who were protected from the malady of their soul's greed will surely attain salvation.

should keep fearing God to protect them from Satan leading them astray. If they fear God as much as is possible for them, God will not let Satan get a hold on them. Otherwise, while being caught in some trial of wealth and children, they will go so far away from the path of God that returning to it will become out of question.

The words *وَاسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ* express what is said above in a positive manner: they should listen to and obey God and His Prophet (sws), and respond to their call of spending for the cause of God. The real benefit of this spending will not go to God and His Prophet (sws); it will be reaped by they themselves if they spend with sincerity and generosity.

The word *شُحٌّ* in the last part of the verse: *وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ* means “greed and avarice”. If this greed found innately in a person dominates him, then it will lead him to doom. Worthy of praise are those servants of God who are protected from this domination; they indeed will be the ones who will succeed in the Hereafter.

The way the word *شُحٌّ* is associated to *نَفْسٌ* (soul) in this verse shows that it also is present among various other instincts found in the human soul. However, this is among those instincts, against which if a person does not remain on guard, will lead him to doom the way sexual drive or anger can. For this reason, it is imperative that it not be left so unchecked that it overpowers the instincts of sacrifice and altruism. The only way to check it is that when a person starts to feel its domination, he should weaken it by spending for the cause of God until it becomes so weak that it is not able to impede virtuous deeds. It is evident from these words of the Qur’ān that those who try to suppress this instinct succeed by the blessing of God, and only those who succeed in this effort are worthy of success in the Hereafter. For this reason, spending for the cause of God is the greatest thing which can earn His pleasure specially the spending which a person does by disregarding his own personal needs: *وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ* (9:53) (and they give preference to them over their own selves though they are in want, (59:9)).

إِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُّضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ (١٧)

This is a mention of the specific after the general. The spending for the cause of God mentioned earlier relates to all types of spending whether it relates to charity or *zakāh* or *jihād*. In this verse, believers are specifically and emphatically urged to spend for *jihād*. In this context, the word “loan”

17. If you lend a generous loan to God, He will pay you back manifold and will forgive you. And God is the Most Appreciative, the Most Forbearing.

is always mentioned in the Qur’ān for *jihād*, and the eloquence and appeal in this use does not require any explanation. In Sūrah Muzzammil, the words are:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا (٢٠:٧٣)

And be diligent in your prayer and pay *zakāh* and give God a goodly loan. (73:20)

Here the words *وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا* (give God a goodly loan) after *وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ* (pay *zakāh*) refer to the spending for the cause of God that is required of a believer in specific circumstances.

The word *مُضَاعَفَةٌ* does not merely mean “to be doubled”; it also means “to increase” whether this increase is of the nature of being doubled or of being multiplied many times (*أَضْعَفًا مُضَاعَفَةً*). I have already explained this word at an earlier instance in this *tafsīr*. Here, in this verse, it is used in this latter meaning.

The implication of the verse is that if God is asking them for a loan, then this does not mean that He is in need of them. The treasures He owns are countless and brimful, and it is not because of any deficiency in them that He is asking for it. The purpose is to provide these people with an opportunity to earn great profit – as much as ten, in fact seventy times – by spending in His way. The only condition for this loan is that it should be “a goodly loan”. I have already explained this term at an earlier instance. It means that this loan should be given from good and pure wealth with generosity and with willingness of the heart and given in spite of the fact that the giver is needy. The loan which has these characteristics will be returned by the Almighty to the lenders while being multiplied greatly and He will also bless them with His forgiveness.

The word *شَكُورٌ* in the expression *وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ* means one who accepts with appreciation. Thus what is meant is that the Almighty greatly values the good deeds of His servants and greatly welcomes them even though He is self-sufficient and praiseworthy. What is presented by His servants to Him is presented from the very wealth He bestowed upon them. He never regards this to be a meager contribution, and accepts it by valuing it, and even increases it. Simultaneously, God is also *حَلِيمٌ* (Most Forbearing). As a result, He deals very generously with His servants. If they try to shield themselves from sins, He ignores their faults and blemishes.

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (١٨)¹⁸

The implication of the verse is that whatever sacrifice people will make to please Him will never be concealed from His eyes. People should also rest assured that if they support Him, then He is no weak being. He is Mighty, and every work of His is replete with wisdom. Those who trust Him always succeed, and those who follow His directives never lose their way.

With the grace of God, I come to the end of this *sūrah's tafsīr*. فله الحمد (gratitude is only for Him, and He only blesses us with the urge to do good).

Raḥmānābād

13th April, 1978 AD

4th Jamādī al-Awwal, 1398 AH

18. He has knowledge of the unknown and the manifest. He is the Mighty, the Wise One.